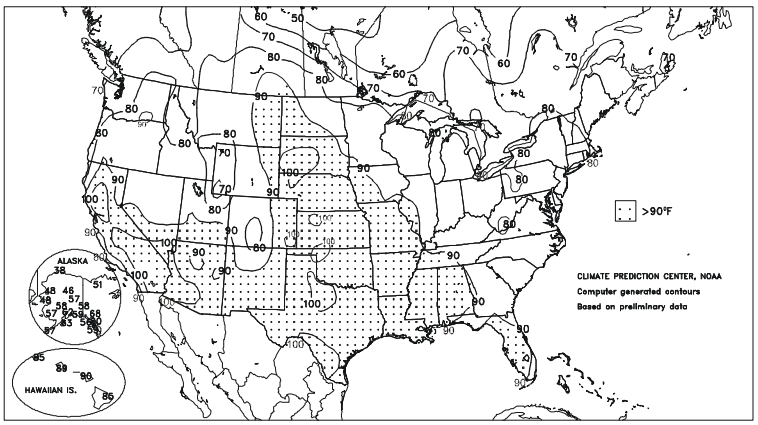
(Continued from front cover)

east as the **central High Plains** and **northwestern Corn Belt**. Weekly temperatures averaged as much as 9°F below normal in the **northern High Plains** and **northern Rockies**. Cold weather also spread into the **interior Northwest**, where readings averaged as much as 5°F below normal. Although summer crops were mostly mature in the freeze-affected areas, the cold weather may have burned back some emerging winter wheat. Widespread precipitation, including some snow, preceded and accompanied the cold outbreak on the **northern and central Plains**, slowing summer crop harvesting but providing drought-easing moisture. In the **Corn Belt**, cooler, wetter conditions slowed crop maturation and disrupted initial corn and soybean harvesting. Toward week's end, significant rainfall reached **eastern parts of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas** for the first time in 2 to 3 months. Extreme dryness persisted, however, on the **southern High Plains**. Farther west, warm weather aided summer crop maturation and fieldwork operations in **California** and the **Southwest**, where temperatures averaged up to 7°F above normal.

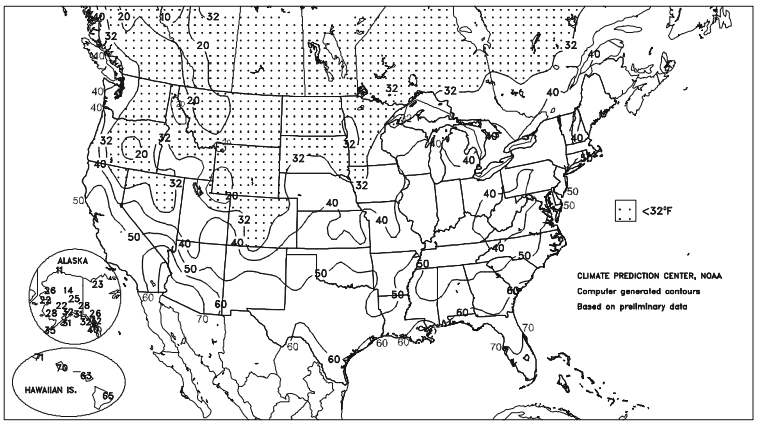
Extreme Maximum Temperature (°F)

SEP 17 - 23, 2000



Extreme Minimum Temperature (°F)

SEP 17 - 23, 2000



Hurricane Gordon weakened before making landfall, reaching the coast as a tropical storm. On the evening of September 17, **Cedar Key, FL** reported maximum sustained winds of 53 mph with gusts to 68 mph. Elsewhere along the west coast of **Peninsular Florida**, gusts reached 54 mph in **St. Petersburg** and 48 mph in **Ft. Myers**. **Ft. Myers** also netted a 24-hour (September 17-18) rainfall of 6.39 inches. By Tuesday, Gordon's remnants produced heavy rain as far north as the **Mid-Atlantic highlands** before moving out to sea. After midweek, Tropical Storm Helene developed and followed a similar track across the **eastern Gulf of Mexico**. In **western Florida**, Helene produced September 21-22 rainfall of 7.93 inches in **Tallahassee** and 10.58 inches in **Apalachicola**. **Tallahassee's** total of 7.86 inches on Friday represented their wettest day since a single-day record of 8.86 inches fell on September 21, 1969. Farther northeast, Helene brought the second soaking rainfall in less than a week to the **Carolinas** and adjacent areas. Month-to-date rainfall through September 24 reached 13.74 inches (292 percent of normal) in **Tallahassee**, their greatest monthly total since 13.92 inches fell in September 1998. **Tallahassee's** rainfall was 16.16 inches (24.62 inches below normal) during the first 7 months of 2000, but totaled 21.86 inches (9.62 inches above normal) from August 1 - September 24. Elsewhere in the **Southeast**, month-to-date rainfall included 10.39 inches in **Macon, GA**, 10.42 inches in **Ft. Myers**, and 13.60 inches in **North Myrtle Beach, SC**.

Early in the week, record heat lingered on the **Plains**. On Sunday, **Denver** notched a high of 95°F, their 61st day this year with a high at or above 90°F (the previous record was 60 days in 1994) and latest date on record with a high of 95°F or higher. Similarly in **Wyoming**, **Cheyenne's** high of 91°F on September 17 was their latest observance of 90°F heat (previously 90°F on September 14, 1948). Meanwhile, **Rapid City, SD** recorded 101°F, their latest triple-digit heat (previously 103°F on September 15, 1948). On Tuesday, **Wichita, KS** (100°F) logged a 6th day of triple-digit heat this month, tying their September 1985 record. On the same day in **California**, highs soared to daily-record levels in locations such as **Red Bluff** (106°F) and **Stockton** (102°F). In contrast, cool air edged into the **East** and **South**, setting several daily records. On Sunday, lows included 33°F in **Blacksburg, VA** and 41°F in **Cincinnati, OH**. A day later, **Austin-Bergstrom, TX** noted a low of 48°F, their earliest autumn low temperature below 50°F (previously 47°F on September 19, 1981). **Austin-Bergstrom's** low came just 13 days after their all-time-record high of 112°F on September 5, but was followed by a late-week return to daily-record heat (101°F on September 23).

A much more impressive cold snap arrived in the **northern Plains** and **Northwest** after midweek. On September 22 in **Montana**, **Billings** (25°F) recorded their earliest autumn reading at or below 25°F. Elsewhere in **Montana**, **Great Falls'** minimum of 16°F on Saturday represented their lowest September reading since 10°F on September 24, 1926. **Great Falls** also noted their largest September temperature swing on record, 79°F below the high of 95°F on September 15 (previously 73°F in 1934 and 1995). Meanwhile in **Washington**, Saturday's lows of 22°F in **Spokane** and 31°F in **Wenatchee** tied September-record lows, set in 1926 and 1985, respectively. September 21-23 snowfall reached 9.5 inches in **Sheridan, WY** and 5.0 inches in **Billings**. **Cheyenne, WY** netted 10.6 inches on September 23-24, including 6.4 inches on the latter date. **Cheyenne's** previous single-day record for September was 6.1 inches on September 14, 1912.

Farther south, cooler air sweeping across the **southern Plains** caused blowing dust. On September 20, visibilities in **Texas** dropped to as low as 3 miles in **Wink** and 4 miles in **Lubbock**. Later in the week, however, much-needed rain in **Oklahoma** ended **Oklahoma City's** record-breaking spell without a drop of rain at 54 days (July 30 to September 21). **Oklahoma City** received 1.67 inches from September 22-24. Meanwhile in **Texas**, **Dallas-Ft. Worth's** streak without measurable rain ended at 84 days (July 1 - September 22). Much heavier rain soaked parts of the **Midwest**, where **Rockford, IL** tallied a daily-record total of 3.05 inches on Friday.

Wet weather continued across much of **Alaska**, although temperatures rebounded to near- or above-normal levels. Early in the week, **King Salmon** (27°F on Monday) notched a daily-record low. Two days later in the **Aleutians**, **Cold Bay** posted a daily-record high of 56°F. Meanwhile in **Hawaii**, mostly dry weather prevailed for the 3rd consecutive week, following the leeward areas' drought-easing August rains.